



Media Release

10 November 2019

COMMUNITIES CONDEMN STATE GOVERNMENT PROPOSAL TO RAISE THE WARRAGAMBA DAM WALL

The communities of Blue Mountains City and Wollondilly Shire came together today (Sunday, 10 November 2019) to condemn the State Government proposal to raise the Warragamba Dam wall.

A Community Forum, hosted by the Mayors of Blue Mountains City and Wollondilly Shire councils, attracted almost 200 attendees, while hundreds also watched the event that was streamed live on social media.

Blue Mountains Mayor Mark Greenhill, who started proceedings by acknowledging the devastation caused by bush fires in NSW and Queensland in recent days and expressing solidarity to those affected by the fires, said the Warragamba Dam proposal was immoral.

“Blue Mountains City Council’s principle concern is the inadequacy of the Environmental Impact Assessment process to date, including the assessment of impacts on World Heritage, Aboriginal Cultural Heritage and the ecological values of the Greater Blue Mountains National Park.

“We strongly urge the NSW Government to reconsider the proposed action, and to cease pursuing its plans to inundate this highly valuable and significant area.”

Wollondilly Shire Mayor Matthew Deeth said: “We are asking the State Government to undertake thorough engagement with the local communities and other stakeholders; to consult properly with the indigenous community whose cultural sites will be impacted; to fully examine the environmental impact the raising of the wall would have; and to seriously look at other options to address flood mitigation.”

Guest speaker, former NSW Minister for Environment and Minister for Emergency Services, The Hon Bob Debus, said: “Earlier this year the World Heritage committee of UNESCO stated that the inundation of the National Park is likely to have an impact on the outstanding values of the park.

“The World Heritage committee of UNESCO asked our federal government to ensure that the impact of the proposal to raise the wall should be vigorously assessed. It’s asked that an EIS assessing all potential impacts, including those on Aboriginal cultural heritage, should be submitted for review before any final decision is taken.”

Gundungurra woman and Warragamba resident, Taylor Clarke, 21, said she was angry about the proposal.

“I am angry, and I will continue to be angry, for as long as we have to fight for this, because we shouldn’t have to fight,” Ms Clarke said.

“As we take our next steps forward in this campaign, and indeed as a community, we need to think about the people who are going to walk this land after us. What precedent are we setting?”

“When we win this campaign, think of the amazing example we are setting for the next generation, that we are willing to fight to protect our natural heritage.

“And heaven forbid, if we don’t (win this campaign), what are we showing the next generation? That we’re willing to destroy a National Park for development. To put people in danger. To put people’s lives on the line, for development.

“I’m very angry, but also very encouraged that all of you are here talking to us about this today.”

Panellists, including Member for Blue Mountains Trish Doyle, Gundungurra Elder Aunty Sharyn Halls, Total Environment Centre’s Saul Deane and Give a Dam campaign manager Harry Burkitt, also spoke and took questions from attendees at the event.

The full two-hour forum can be viewed at <https://www.bmcc.nsw.gov.au/>